

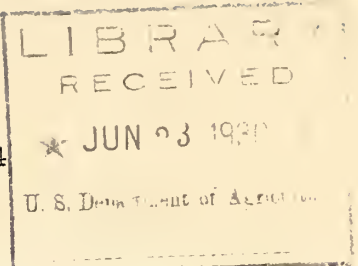
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SAFEGUARDING YOUR FOODS AND DRUGS -- No. 14

Tuesday, June 3, 1930.



A series of radio talks by W. R. M. Wharton, chief, Eastern District, Food, Drug, and Insecticide Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture, delivered Tuesday mornings at 10 a.m. Eastern Standard Time, through WJZ, New York, and the following other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company: KWK, St. Louis; WREN, Kansas City; KFAB, Lincoln, Nebr.; WRC, Washington; WBZA, Boston; KSTP, St. Paul; WSM, Nashville; WAPI, Birmingham; WJAX, Jacksonville; WPTF, Raleigh; WRVA, Richmond.

Well, my friends, here I am ready to talk to you again on safeguarding your food and drug supply, and on reading food and drug labels. I am your Government representative telling you stories of my personal experiences in enforcing the Federal Food and Drugs Act, which protects your food and drug supply, and telling you how to read labels in order that you may protect yourselves.

I want to make a special appeal today, to my listeners in Alabama and Tennessee to become members of the "read-the-label Club." Thousands of consumers are learning to read the label. New York State leads all the rest. Alabama and Tennessee need to add to their quota in order to equal the interest developed in Kansas, Iowa, and Minnesota. To become a member of the "Read-the-Label Club" all you have to do is to read labels intelligently. Write now for copies of all my free Read-the-Label information. Won't you all take this step to protect yourselves?

I shall talk to you today about so-called health foods, and I shall tell you more about how to read labels. Recently Mr. W. G. Campbell, Chief of the Food, Drug, and Insecticide Administration, warned the public to beware of so-called health foods. He said "The public should beware of 'health foods', of 'life grains', and other food products for which the manufacturers claim curative or health giving properties." "For," he said, "in general the products so sold possess merely some of the nutritive qualities to be expected in any wholesome food product." He went on in his warning to say, "Some manufacturers have gone so far as to claim that their products are absolutely necessary to conserve life and health, when no such thing is true at all."

Your present speaker has recently had an experience with one of these products. I was working in a southern State and the Health Commissioner of a large city asked me to go with him to inspect the plant of a manufacturer who was making a so-called health food. We got into the Health Commissioner's car, and went to the plant, which was outside of the city limits. Arriving at the plant, the Health Commissioner introduced himself, and me, to the manager and asked for permission to inspect the plant. The manager very politely yet firmly refused permission, saying that the city health commissioner had no right to come into the plant, since the plant was outside the city limits.

Thereupon I said, "I am a government official," and the reply was "Oh! in that case you may go through." Well the upshot of the matter was that we both went into the plant.

(over)

Now remember, this plant was making a fruit product which was alleged to be a health food! Bosh! This so-called health food was just a fruit product, and it wasn't even clean. The plant was the vilest, dirtiest place that I was ever in, and yet, they were claiming to make a health food!

We found practically all of the fruit in the plant was rotten and decayed, and maggoty, over which rats had been running, -- the floors were dirty and covered thickly with a gummy material which was undergoing a souring and rotting process, -- utensils were uncleaned apparently for weeks, with residue of fermented and soured materials in them, and yet, my friends-- we will call the manufacturer Mr. Jones--Mr. Jones was pretending to manufacture a health giving product. What did Jones say about his alleged health food?

Now here is what Jones had to say about his filthy, fake health food, and mark me well, I shall quote his own reading matter. Here is what Jones said:- here are his bombastic words:-

"When the first sun at creation's dawn rose beyond the eastern rim of the blue Pacific, and as its rays fell upon the isles of the East Indies, the giant orb of day must have smiled at the marvelous handwork that lay before his eye," - and Jones continues:- "There were the flowers, the trees, the mountains and bubbling streams; there was the far flung ocean, the birds of brilliant plumage, and the mighty beasts." - says Jones: - "Yet amid all this glorious panorama stood Jones' Exotic Fruit Tree, groaning under the weight of Nature's most marvelous fruit, destined to be man's greatest boon," for what? says Jones - "For health!"

This is the kind of bunk that Jones was applying to his rotten fruit product. Well, Jones found the next morning that an order of the Board of Health prevented his selling his product in the city near which his plant was located and he found interstate commerce closed to him, and so he went out of business.

This illustrates, my friends, what City, State and Federal officers are doing to protect your food supply.

And let me add my friends, there appear to be many manufacturers of food products who wish to capitalize upon what now appears to be almost a public obsession on the question of health - health foods, health fads and health exercises. Logically any product sold as a health food should be capable of creating health, but so far as I know, none of the foods sold as health food will create health. They are not health giving or curative when there is a lack of health. So-called health giving biscuits, foods, and waters represent money wasted if purchased for their curative properties.

Health foods are not all filthy and rotten like the product I have described. Indeed, this is a rare exception, but none of them will produce health, for as an expert of the Food, Drug and Insecticide Administration has recently said, you cannot buy health in bottles, boxes or packages.

Now for my read-the-label information. I shall talk to you today about the little purple stamp which you see on meat. The Federal Meat Inspection Act was passed in 1906 and is enforced by the Bureau of Animal

Industry of the United States Department of Agriculture. It provides for the inspection of all meat which is shipped in interstate commerce. It does not apply to locally butchered meats, but many cities and states have similar laws which provide for the inspection of meat intended for local sale. Have you seen the little round stamp on meat which reads: "U. S. Inspected and Passed"? Do you know what it means? Well, friends, this little stamp on meat means that the animals furnishing the meat have been inspected, both before and after slaughter, by expert veterinary inspectors of the U. S. Bureau of Animal Industry. It means that the meat comes from healthy animals, that it was clean and wholesome in every way at the time of inspection and is fit and proper for food. It does not have any significance with respect to the grade or relative quality of the meat, but it does mean, it assures you, that the meat comes from healthy animals, and is wholesome and proper for food. Meat to be entitled to bear the little purple stamp must come from animals which pass rigid and thorough ante-mortem and post mortem examinations made by inspectors of the Bureau of Animal Industry who are stationed in all of the meat packing plants of the United States where meat is prepared for shipment in interstate commerce. Meat which does not pass the inspection is condemned, and is used for fertilizer, grease, or other inedible purpose.

Now let us consider the little purple stamp again. It reads "U. S. Inspected and Passed" and each purple circle bears also a number which is the number of the packing establishment where the meat was prepared.

Thus if you are interested to know where meat comes from, you may find out from this number where it was prepared.

You may have wondered whether the purple color or dye used in making the little purple imprint on the meat is harmful. Dr. John R. Mohler, Chief of the Bureau of Animal Industry assures you that the ingredients of the ink are absolutely harmless. He says they are as harmless as fruit juice. When you find meat that does not bear the purple stamp "U. S. Inspected and Passed" such meat will be a local product, that is locally butchered. It may or may not have been inspected by your local authorities. If it has been so inspected you may be assured that it is pure and wholesome, but if you have no local inspection then meat which does not bear the little purple stamp may or may not be prepared from healthy and sound animals. My advice to label readers is to look for the little purple stamp when you buy meat, or else assure yourself that you have a local meat inspection service.

The Bureau of Animal Industry also inspects many other meat products - sausages - cured and canned meats - which enter in interstate commerce, and all such products must pass rigid inspection and be wholesome, healthful and sound before they are allowed to bear the "Inspected and Passed" legend. Moreover, all spices and condiments which enter into the composition of such products are tested. Water supplies in meat packing establishments are required to be of high sanitary quality, and your inspection stamp on meats "U. S. Inspected and Passed" and the same legend on canned meat products, sausages and packages of meat means that all of these conditions have been safeguarded.

I have told you before that the little purple stamp on meat gives you no idea as to the grade or quality of the meat, but there are definite grades, definite classes and definite qualities of meat, and these vary quite widely. Dressed meats have been definitely standardized, graded, and classified, by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, of the United States Department of Agriculture. This Bureau has not only defined and established U. S. grades for meat, but also agents of that Bureau are now grading large quantities of dressed beef, dressed veal and calves, and dressed lamb and mutton.

Carcasses and cuts are examined, classified, graded and stamped with the appropriate class and U. S. grade designation, and these stamps carry through on the various cuts to the consumer. This grading service which is being done by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics is done upon request of slaughterers, wholesalers, and retail meat dealers. It is not obligatory. It should be of interest to consumers to know that certain firms are beginning to put up fresh meats in retail packages specifically graded and marked according to U. S. grades, and it is believed that the consumers' response to this phase of meat marking will grow.

The demand for service grading and marking of carcasses and cuts of meat with U. S. class and grade designation is only now beginning to assume any considerable proportions. The percentage of meat so graded and stamped in relation to the total quantities of meat sold is very small, and therefore you may not yet have encountered the U. S. grade mark on meat, but label readers, you will sooner or later encounter them, and for this reason you must know the names of the U. S. grades for meat and what they mean. Moreover, even though you do not soon encounter meat marked as to U. S. grades, haven't you the right to ask your retail meat dealer for the name of the grade of meat he is selling you? and haven't you a right to expect from him a truthful answer? I say to my label readers that you have a right to ask your retail meat dealer what grade of meat he is selling you, for I say to you that your retail meat dealer buys meat by grade and perhaps by U. S. grade. He knows that if he buys on the basis of U. S. grades he gets the best value for his money and merchandise to please his trade. Haven't you an equal right to buy from him on the same basis?

Therefore, insist upon your retail meat dealer's telling you what grade of meat he is selling you, and if he refuses or sidesteps the issue, or says he doesn't know, tell him to find out for you. If he still refuses then my advise would be to go to some other retail meat dealer who can, and will, tell you, for the only way you can compare values is to have a definite idea of relative qualities.

And you must know the names of U. S. grades for meat, and what they mean. This I propose to tell you quoting from a bulletin of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics of the Department of Agriculture.

There are seven grades of beef and heifer beef. They are from "best" to "poorest," Prime or A #1, Choice or #1, Good or #2, Medium or #3, Common or #4, Cutter or #5, and low Cutter or #6. Cow beef, Bull beef and stag beef on the other hand are graded into six grades. There is no Prime or A #1 grade in these classes. Choice or #1 represents the highest grade and Low

Cutter or #6, the lowest grade. The intermediate grades are the same as for steer beef and heifer beef.

Applying to veal, lamb, and mutton, there are six U. S. grades called Prime or A #1, Choice or #1, Good or #2, Medium or #3, Common or #4, and Cull or #5.

The factors that go to determine the grades of meat are conformation, finish and quality. Conformation or the form of carcasses or their sides or cuts is a reliable guide in determining relative desirability of meat. Finish which refers to thickness, color, character and distribution of fat, is another index, and Quality which is a characteristic of both the flesh and the fat, and pertains to thickness, firmness and strength of both the muscle fiber and the connective tissue, is a third guide to the grading inspector. A determination of the grade also involves the amount, consistency and character of the juices or extractives which surround and permeate the muscle fibre and connective tissue, and lastly the color of the meat as a whole serves as an excellent index to quality.

Now, my friends, let me reiterate in my fourteenth talk, for the fourteenth time, if you want to be an intelligent buyer you must read labels intelligently. I know you wish to employ intelligence in your marketing, therefore learn to know exactly what you want to purchase, and then insist upon getting it and double check by reading labels. You may learn to read labels by writing for copies of all my Read-the-Label information. They are free. Write to W. R. M. Wharton, United States Department of Agriculture, 201 Varick St., New York City.

Next week at this hour my subject will be cheese. I will have perhaps the most interesting and most valuable information for the label readers yet given. You must not fail to listen to me next week.

Good morning, and I thank you.

D. L. ...
I. H. ...